

News Release

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Students learn green energy with hands-on experiments

KOKOMO, Ind. — Anthony Willman creates the next generation of energy production, with what appears to be a pane of glass.

On a slightly overcast day, Willman and his classmates in an energy and green chemistry class set up a Fresnel lens in front of Hunt Hall on the Indiana University Kokomo campus, experimenting with the ability of the solar heat concentrator to produce energy.

Willman, a senior from Peru, is excited about the possibilities.

“This is the next generation of energy production,” he said. “We’re trying to figure out better ways to create energy with less pollution. This is a great class.”

Their experiment demonstrates just one use for solar power, he said, and added that in one South American country, low-income people receive a similar solar cell to use to heat water and cook food.

His class demonstrates that use, using the Fresnel lens to heat some chicken strips for a student passing by their experiment.

Energy and green chemistry, taught by Kasem Kasem, professor of chemistry, introduces topics in existing and potential renewable energy sources, including hydroelectric, geothermal, tidal, wind, and solar energy.

“Energy is one of the most important subject nowadays,” said Kasem, who conducts extensive research in green energy. “There are a lot of jobs available in the field of energy production and distribution. Students from many majors can benefit from having working knowledge in this area.”

With his dual major in chemistry and earth and sustainability sciences, Nick Daanen has enjoyed learning about alternative energy sources.

“We’re so focused on fossil fuels, so it’s interesting to learn about the alternatives,” he said. “Some of these are very powerful energy sources. It helps you understand the current and future possibilities of energy sources.”

Daanen, from Kokomo, encourages more students to take this class and others in the earth and sustainability sciences program.

“Energy and the environment are issues that impact everyone,” he said. “Information like this is going to be important. We don’t think about where the energy comes from when we turn on an appliance. As we become more knowledgeable, we can be qualified to make policy changes in the future.”

As chemistry major, with the interest in green energy sources, Jayesh Lalla, Kokomo, said the class provides viable career options.

“We’re identifying the emerging technology of the contemporary world, learning about different forms of energy.”

Indiana University Kokomo serves north central Indiana.

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